श्री नमो नारायण मीणा: सर, जहां तक माननीय सदस्य ने प्रधानमंत्री ग्रामीण सड़क योजना के बारे में सवाल उठाया है, इसको प्राथमिकता दी जा रही है और प्रधान मंत्री ग्रामीण सड़क योजना से संबंधित जितने भी मामले आते हैं, उनको बहुत तेज गति से स्वीकृति दी जाती है। अगर इस तरह को कोई स्पैशल केस माननीय सदस्य के पास हो तो हमें बताएं, उसके बारे में हम जल्दी क्लीयरेंस देंगे।

*342. [The questioner(s) (Shri Ram Jethmalani and Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad) were absent. For answer *vide* page 38 infra.]

Bogibeel rail-cum-road bridge

*343. SHRI SILVIUS CONDPAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bogibeel rail-cum-road bridge over Brahmaputra river in Assam would be declared as a National Project; and

(b) when the construction works of this bridge started and by when it is expected to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R.VELU): (a) to (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) The proposal for declaring Bogibeel-rail-cum-road project as "National Project" was considered by the Government. It was directed that the project be implemented through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for which funds be located in consultation with Ministry of Finance and the Planning Commission. As the project is financially non-viable, funds mobilization through SPV mechanism may not be amenable. The proposal to fund the project as 'National Project is under further consideration of the Government.

(b) The work on this project was commenced on 21.04.2002. Project is targeted for completion by 2010-11 subject to availability of resources.

SHRI SILVIUS CONDPAN: Sir, I have been the answer of the hon. Minister given in two parts. In part (a) of his reply, the hon. Minister says that the project is financially non-viable. Again, the hon. Minister is replying that it is being considered by the Planning Commission to make it a

national project. And, in part (b) , the answer is that the construction of the bridge will be completed by 2010.

Now, Sir, to me, both these answers appear contradictory. There is no answer at all to my question. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister would clearly state that the Bogibeel rail-cum-road bridge construction project will be taken up seriously by the Government. Sir, I am saying this because, here, the interest of the North-East people is involved. It is also important because it is the border area of the country. I want the hon. Minister to say very categorically whether the Bogibeel rail-cum-road bridge construction project will be taken up seriously.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, this project was sanctioned way back in 1997-98. The cost of the project was Rs. 972 crores. Though it was provided a budget of Rs. 1000 crores, the Cabinet, subsequently, approved Rs. 972 crores for it. The RITES had taken up the preliminary survey as well as the seismic survey, etc., and arrived at a cost of Rs. 1767 crores. This being a mega project, it was proposed to the World Bank for financing it as a national project. The World Bank said, after having considered that the ROR is 15.35 percent, that it cannot be a rail project, and that it can only be a socio-economic project. Accordingly, the World Bank directed that this could be proposed to the Government of India. When the Government of India was approached, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs said, "You form a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), and find the resources and implement the project through the SPV". Now, the reason why the SPV could not be formed was that it was unviable. Any project with less than 14 per cent of ROR is unviable. That is why there is a problem in creating an SPV and implementing it. Thereafter, we have now again moved a Cabinet note saying that this can be taken up again and reconsidered as a National Project.

Sir, this project, as he has mentioned, is a vital project. Firstly, it connects the north with the south of Assam. It also saves more than 200 kilometres of rail route. Thirdly, it is also a strategic route from defence point of view.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, be brief.

SHRI R. VELU: That is why I quite agree with the hon. Member that this has to be taken up seriously. We need to find resources for that and do it.

SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Sir, the hon. Minister has given a reply that, though this project was started in 2002, actually, in the field, nothing has happened till now. Half of the targeted time, that is 2010-11 has already passed. May I know from the hon. Minister how much work has been completed till now?

Secondly, they are saying that the project is financially non-viable only now, at this stage. (*Interruptions*) In his reply to the question of my hon. colleague, the hon. Minister has already said that from the strategic point, from the defence point of view also, this bridge is very important, being the border area. So, may I know from the hon. Minister how much work has been completed till now and how much money has been released till now as half of the time is already over?

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, we have already spent Rs. 580 crores and works relating to boulder collection, approach roads and all the preliminary work for floating tenders are in progress. In fact, for substructure, the tenders has been floated. Subject to the availability of resources, we have already promised to complete it by 2010-11.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Uday Pratap Singh.

श्री उदय प्रताप सिंह: महोदय, मेरे सवाल का उत्तर मिल गया है।

श्री सभापति: क्या क्वेश्चन ऑवर से पहले ही मिल गया? ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI ROBERT KHARSHIING: Mr. Chairman Sir, while I compliment the hon. Minister of Railways, Shri Lalu Prasad Yadav, for recently paying a visit to the New Delhi Railway Station to check the facilities and amenities, I would like to know from the Minister of Railways whether he would like to follow the examples of the Minister of Telecom and the Minister of Civil Aviation in regularly calling meetings with the MPs from the North-East to discuss the facilities and amenities available at railway stations and platforms.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, usually, the General Manager of the concerned Railway Division calls for meetings with MPs and MLAs.

SHRI ROBERT KHARSHIING: He has never called for it so far ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI R. VELU: I would ask the General Manager to call for a meeting immediately... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: He is not always cooperative. There are a lot of problems in the North-East. ...(*interruptions*)...

SHRI R. VELU: I shall ask him to call for a meeting within a month ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Sir, there are a lot of problems in the North-East. Those officers do not listen to the MPs ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI R. VELU: If the hon. Members want to meet the Minister of Railways, Shri Lalu Prasad Yadavji, it is all right. If he is not available, they are welcome to meet me on next Monday... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI ROBERT KHARSHIING: You must convene a meeting, Sir ..(*Interruptions*)...

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: सर, हम लालू जी की भलाई के लिए बोल रहे हैं, वे इस हाउस में आते ही नहीं हैं। ...(व्यवधान)...

SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Every time it is not ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI ROBERT KHARSHIING: We would like to have a meeting with you...(*Interruptions*)...Sir, you must convene the meeting.

SHRI R. VELU: If you don't permit...(*Interruptions*)...how will I do...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Sir, till now, Railways is not in a position to run an electric train in Assam and the North Eastern Region. Your officers do not cooperate with the Members of Parliament and you are saying that you talk to NF Railways General Manager ...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री सभापति: चलिए, छोड़िए ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: सभापति महोदय, *...(व्यवधान)...

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, I will definitely...(*Interruptions*)...

प्रो॰ राम देव भंडारी: सभापति महोदय, *...(व्यवधान)...

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: सभापति महोदय, *...(व्यवधान)...

श्री सभापति: अगर आप बिना अनुमति के बोलेंगे, तो आपका रिकार्ड पर नहीं जाएगा और मुझे एक्शन लेना पड़ेगा।

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, I assure the hon. Chairman that within one month, I will call a meeting for the North Eastern Region.

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*Not recorded.